

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 3-16 are pending. Claims 3-7, 10, 11, 15 and 16 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 15 and 16 are being canceled.

The allowability of claims 8, 9 and 12-14 is noted with appreciation. Amendments have placed these claims in condition for allowance.

Although the Examiner has written "Akira" once in the Office Action, it is understood that the Akira reference has been withdrawn.

Claim 1 has been rejected as anticipated by Muraoka (JP '949). Reconsideration is requested.

Muraoka cannot anticipate claim 1, at least because Muraoka has no element corresponding to the "holding device" of claim 1. The Examiner has not identified any "holding device."

The Examiner also has not identified any "positioning device," although it appears the Examiner may consider the rollers 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b to correspond to the claimed "positioning device having a sloped portion."

The Examiner merely says "see Figs. 1, 3" as support for the rejection. Figs. 1, 3 show the rollers, a workpiece 1, and various stationary members. There is no "holding device" having a horizontal movement speed. Nothing is shown for holding the workpiece 1, nor for causing the workpiece 1 to move.

Claim 1 refers to coactions between the holding and positioning devices. First, claim 1 states that "the holding device brings the component into contact with the sloped portion" of the positioning device. Muraoka does not disclose any holding device that brings the workpiece into contact with the rollers. Second, claim 1 states that "the horizontal movement speed of the holding device substantially agrees with the ... velocity of the first roller member...." No means for equalizing these speeds is disclosed or taught by Muraoka. The Examiner has not even identified any element of Muraoka having a horizontal movement speed.

In summary, there is no prima facie basis for the rejection of claim 1. Neither the Office Action nor the reference discloses the combination of elements recited in claim 1. Allowance of claim 1 is requested.

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JAF:lf

Respectfully submitted,



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